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Process to Prevent the Sending of Unwanted E-mail (SPAM)

Cross -Reference to Related Applications

Not Applicable

Federally Sponsored Research or Development

Not Applicable

Definitions:

Spam: A colloquial term for unwanted email. In general, unsolicited, unwanted, and repeated emails.

Spammer: An entity (company, business, person, etc) that sends unsolicited email.

Company: An entity of one or more people or a business operating with the goal of reducing the amount of spam.

Client: An individual (company, business, etc) that owns an email address and prefers to not receive unsolicited email.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention is in the field of electronic mail (email). This is a process that will dramatically reduce the amount of unwanted spam that is sent to an individual, businesses or other organizations.

Spam, or unwanted email, is a common problem and need not be described. There are numerous programs and methods in use to filter out Spam. There are no programs, processes, or businesses that effectively prevent bulk email senders (Spammers) from sending email to a selected individual or company. This invention is a process that will result in fewer spam messages being sent.

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Brief Summary of the Invention

Current State of Affairs

A plethora of software utilities are found in the software market that claim to reduce the amount of spam. Most, if not all, operate on the concept of managing spam after it arrives in the mailbox. These utilities utilize various methods of identifying the spam with varying degrees of success. They all suffer from the problem of false positives and false negatives. False positives in the sense that messages that are not spam are identified as spam, and false negatives in the sense that some spam messages are not identified as spam. The utilities then either delete the spam or move it to a special area.

The current methods share some additional inadequacies: They have no effect on the problem until after the spam has been received. They do not address one of the core problems: too much spam is being sent. By the time the spam is subjected to the scrutiny of the individual's protection program it has consumed significant amounts of the Internet bandwidth, resources of the ISP (Internet Service Provider) and the individual consumer. This process will reduce resource consumption at all of these levels.

This process invention addresses the spam problem at the level of the spammer. It reduces the amount of spam sent to selected addresses, and it reduces the total amount of spam sent through the Internet.

Requests and proposals for new laws have been made and discussions ensued. At this time the general consensus seems to be that spammers can operate from any country and are not bound by the laws of countries other than those where they reside. The prospect of reduced spam through legislation is dim.

Process

A Company is established to conduct the process (see definition of company). A database of clients is created. When a client receives spam they may then notify the Company of this event. The company may then notify a select number of clients of the spam incident. These notified clients have the opportunity to inform the spammer of the database and the desire of members to not receive spam. The spammer has the opportunity to compare and remove client names from their address list. If the spammer removes the client addresses from their address list, nothing further occurs. The goal of the process has been achieved; the clients receive fewer spam messages. If the spammer continues to spam the clients, additional clients may be notified of continued spamming. The number of clients notifying the spammer of the list and its purpose may become very large. The large number of incoming email may tend to encourage the spammer to stop sending spam to the database members.

Brief Description of the Several Views of the Drawing

There are no drawings.

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Detailed Description of the Invention

This invention is a process to reduce the amount of Spam sent to Clients.

A Company is established for the purpose of reducing the amount of spam sent to clients. The company creates a database of Clients. This database will typically contain the email addresses for each client. Clients may be obtained through any combination of standard and non-standard methods to include commercial advertising, web sites, and person to person communications.

When a client receives spam, the client may forward the spam to the company. The company may examine the spam message and determine the original sender and the contact point. The company might then track the spammer's history. In accordance with the spammer's history, the company might notify some number of clients of the spamming incident and the spammer's contact point.

One or more of the notified clients may decide to advise the spammer of the company, its purpose, the database, and the desire of the clients to not receive spam. This spammer is provided the opportunity to remove the company's clients from their mailing list. One or more methods are made available to assist the spammer in removing clients from their address.

If the spammer chooses to continue to send spam to the clients, the clients may again choose to notify the company. The company may note that this spammer has been previously notified of the client list. In response, the company may take the opportunity to notify a larger list of clients of the spammer's actions. From this larger list a greater number of clients may take the opportunity to advise the spammer of the company's purpose and the client list. Each time the spammer chooses to continue spamming any of the clients, additional clients may be informed of this behavior. More clients will be given the opportunity to advise and request the spammer to alter his or her behavior. Some clients may decide to advise the spammer more than once. Just as the spammer sends out numerous emails to advise people of some item they (the spammer) perceive as important, clients may choose to send numerous advisements to the spammer requesting them to stop spamming members of the client list.

If the spammer chooses to ignore the client requests, the volume of advisements received by the spammer may possibly become so large so as to preclude the spammer for disregarding their advice. The quantity of emails received by the spammer may conceivably be sufficient to attract attention of the spammer's service provider. The service provider may possibly select to take action that the spammer cannot ignore.

In the event that the spammer is performing a service for a customer (meaning someone paying the spammer to send out spam or otherwise produce contacts), there will inevitably be some type of contact point. If, for example, that contact point is a phone number, the clients may decide to call that customer and advise them of the spammer's actions and the client's desires. If the customer receives too many calls of this type (the threshold obviously depends on the customer's preferences), the customer may decide that their best interest is to discuss the action with the spammer and possibly change their business agreement. The expected end result is that the clients receive fewer spam messages.

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Essential Components

The essential components of this process are as follows:

A Company is established to pursue this process.

Create a database of clients

Clients notify company of spam events.

Company determines contact point.

Company notifies a list of clients of the event.

Some clients advise spammers to remove clients from their (the spammer's) address book.

Spammers are given a method of remove clients from their address book.

If Spammer does not remove clients from address list additional clients may be notified.

Additional clients may take action to notify the client.

The cycle of send spam, notify more clients, and more notices to the spammer may be repeated multiple times in an effort to encourage the spammer to purge their address list of clients.

Essential Concepts

This process invention incorporates concepts that are novel with regards to processes and in particular to processes involving spam.

A primary concept is that the company is based on first amendment rights. At each step through the process the company and individual have the choice of acting or not acting. If the Company or process is challenged in court the first defense is the right of free speech. If not forbidden by the legal system, the processes may become standard operating procedures.

The purpose of the company is to reduce the amount of spam sent over the Internet. In particular, the purpose of the company is to reduce the amount of spam sent to its clients. The fundamental concept is that if the spammers really understand how strongly the clients desire to have spam free email addresses then the spammer will be more likely to take effort to remove those people from their mailing lists. This is not a spam blocking process. It is a process to voluntarily reduce spam at the source. It is a process to reduce the total amount of spam sent via the Internet.